

PROPOSED CLOSURE OF Marden's BANK

It is no wonder that Marden Residents are feeling under siege; what with the increasing threat of Plans for what seem to be huge housing estates, and now this!

In view of these probabilities, now is not the time to close a much-needed facility as a Bank. Nevertheless, that is what the bosses of the NatWest Bank are proposing to do on the 17th of November. Liz Stanley began a petition against the closure but was told that no matter how many people signed, it was going ahead.

This, from a Company whose very existence is owed to the Government's bail out courtesy of the nation's tax-payers, many of whom live in Marden and its surrounding small settlements such as Hunton and Chainhurst.

Customers are being glibly advised by NatWest that we can use the Staplehurst Branch (how convenient would that be?) or, that they can manage their Accounts at the Post Office where they will be able to pay in or withdraw cash. With all respects to Will and his staff, this will not do. Where is the privacy at our busy Post Office? The Parish Council has written to NatWest's head office at Canary Wharf, London.

Researching the history of banking in Marden, I have discovered that the NatWest bank has had a presence in the village for at least a hundred years. This picture shows The London County and Westminster Bank in early 20th Century Marden, at the corner of Pattenden Lane, before it moved to its present position. You may know it now as Eden Beauty with its white weather boarded exterior.



EDITH DAVIS - Editor

For detailed information about the village don't forget to visit the Society's very own website at www.mardensociety.org.uk

ADVANCE NOTICE

Wednesday 22 October - 8pm - Angela and Mike Cartwright

"Being an Olympic Volunteer"

An account of their experience of Volunteering

 The Parish Pump is distributed free to Members of The Marden Society every two months

 For details of Membership please contact the Membership Secretary Aileen Hill on 01622 831418

The Parish Pump

The Journal of the Marden Society

September 2014

PEARLY KINGS & QUEENS

Royalty came to Marden in the shape of John Scott, the Pearly King of Mile End and Peggy, his hugs and kisses (*missus*), Queen of Highgate. 'The Pearlys' are a charitable institution started by Henry Croft in 1865. He was an orphan who graduated from the workhouse to being a rat catcher and street sweeper around Somers Town market, in the St Pancras area but now disappeared. Here the coster-mongers traded; sellers of costard apples originally, but then the name was applied to all market traders. Theirs was a very close-knit community who believed in helping anyone who was down on their luck. Some of the stallholders would pick up buttons from the street and decorate their clothes with just a few to attract attention. Anyway, Henry acquired a worn-out top hat and dress suit, which he covered with buttons and thus began the Pearly Kings and Queens with their tradition of helping others. His demise was a very sad ending for him; in 1930 he was knocked down by a horse and cart and fatally injured.



There are 32 areas in London, which have their own kings and queens, plus princes and princesses. You go through apprenticeships before you are accepted. Only registered charities receive their collections. John and Peggy's favourites are the Wisdom Hospice in Rochester, where they live, and Animal Welfare. All their expenses and time are donated by the individuals involved. One of our members, Wendy Hemsley, has royal connections in this way.

Costumes – an item of clothing completely covered in buttons is called a 'total'; making it very heavy indeed. They all have copyright on the designs of their own costumes and sew on their own buttons – men included! These designs may include 48,000 pearly buttons. Symbols all have meanings.



Rhyming slang is their secret language – it confused their customers and the police, and if spoken quickly is very hard for outsiders to follow; as we found out.

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We finished with a “ding dong”, had a “butcher’s hook” at the items on the ‘Cain and Abel’, whilst having a cup of ‘Rosie Lee’. Then most of us had a ‘ball and chalk’ down the ‘frog and toad’ with our ‘china plates’ to our ‘gates of Rome’. Lastly we went up the ‘apples and pears’, leaving our ‘daisy roots’ on the ‘Rory O’More’, climbed into ‘Uncle Ned’ and went to ‘Bo-peep’.

EUNICE DOSWELL

HISTORY IN YOUR POCKET cont’d

It has been a few years since I last added to my collection of commemorative coins.

I have at last, purely by chance achieved my wish for the NHS 50 years coin. It is a 50p one struck in 1998. My coin is well worn but I have it now! I also have the £2 Florence Nightingale commemorative coin, which is still quite bright.



Noticeably, they both depict hands

My prize coin though, looking almost freshly minted, is a Charles Dickens £2. Issued in 2012, we had it in our change at Sainsbury’s! It is truly marvellous. It shows a profile of the author and a close look at it reveals all the names of his novels. The most prominent one is David Copperfield.

The inscription on the rim is the well-known, Mr Micawber quotation “Something will turn up”. Its designer is Matthew Dent. I say, give that genius a medal!

Another unexpected find in some change I received, is a Gibraltar £1 coin. The reverse shows a picture of a skull bearing the legend, “Skull of a Neanderthal discovered in Gibraltar in 1846”. The rim is smooth with no inscription and the picture of the Queen is slightly different.



Wondering why it should merit a coin to commemorate its finding, I looked it up. Slightly predating Darwin’s “Origins” it was found in a cave, by a British Naval Officer, Capt. Edmund Flint.

Gibraltar is thought to be one of the last habitats of this pre-human race, which died out about 28,000 years ago. The skull, of a mature female, is now housed at the Natural History Museum in London.



EDITH DAVIS

CHAIRMAN’S REPORT

The Society's Summer Outing to Finchcock's Musical Museum in July was a great success - it was a perfect summer evening and we met at the Museum for a tour of the rooms containing various antique instruments.

We were then given tea or coffee with cake, after which we had an hour's recital and talk using various keyboard instruments. The music was played on the keyboard, which would have been used at that time.

A big thanks to Katrina and her staff at Finchcocks.

MAUREEN CLAYTON - Chairman

Editor’s note: BBC Radio 3 often holds recitals at Finchcocks and two weeks after the Marsoc outing, Melvyn Tan, forte piano specialist, performed a programme of music originally written for the instruments held by Finchcocks. One of which, was the Beethoven: 'Moonlight' Sonata. The programme notes remark, of the “Beethoven: Piano Sonata in c sharp minor, Op. 27 No. 2 'Moonlight' “Once heard in the magical setting of Finchcocks, this most famous of piano works might never sound the same again”. Unsurprisingly the event was sold out!

THE VILLAGE GREEN APPLICATION

Marden Society Member, Trevor Simmons, was naturally very disappointed that his application was dismissed by a Committee of KCC Councillors on 3 June this year. It followed a very long period of research by Trevor. As anyone who attended the hearing during the week of November 11th - 14th last year will testify, he remained completely unflappable during what can only be described as aggressive cross examination by the Club’s barrister. One would have thought that a terrible crime had been committed. The presiding Inspector pulled her up at times. In her initial report, the Inspector described all Trevor’s witnesses as wholly credible. Some of those witnesses said afterwards that they had felt intimidated by the questioning.

At the June meeting Trevor was deservedly cheered by supporters for his campaign.

NOTICE OF NEXT MEETING

Wednesday 24th September

when Gillian Ellen will give an illustrated talk about the ship

The Medway Queen.

She will cover the launch, the war and Dunkirk to the present day. Gillian will have some key rings, notepads etc to sell to help raise money for the preservation of this important historic “little ship”.

The meeting will be held at 8.00pm in the Old School Room of the Memorial Hall.

There will be raffle and tea/coffee and biscuits.

Everyone is welcome.